

against which to point out inconsistencies in everyday practices. Seigel deftly captures this strategy by tracking the debates in the Afro-Brazilian and African American presses about proposals for African American immigration to Brazil and the movement to erect a monument to honor the “*Mãe Preta*” (Black Mother). Despite a seemingly common diasporic strategy to attack racial discrimination and recognize the lasting legacies of slavery, however, the U.S.-Brazilian dialogue often got lost in translation.

Seigel is adamant in arguing that comparative studies about national ideological and social systems can become discursive tropes that flatten complexities and ambiguities. Among the important contributions of this outstanding study the ways it identifies international exchanges, complex circulations of people and ideas, and the ways they influenced and transformed the local. Yet, at times the author is forced somewhat uncomfortably into national comparisons, recognizing, for example, that African American newspaper editors had a uniquely different agenda and understanding of Brazil than did their Afro-Brazilian counterparts. In large part, both were shaped by distinct national narratives, agendas, and identities. The local many times took precedent over the transnational. As Seigel points out, the reified “other” could serve as a useful political strategy for setting standards and making useful comparisons to buttress arguments, and it was precisely this approach that Afro-Brazilians and African Americans employed to promote national agendas. News of lynchings in the U.S. South could reassure Brazilians of all colors that race relations in their country were superior to those of the allegedly civilized giant to the north. Embracing that notion also served as a measure against which to emphasize discrepancies between discourse and reality. Similarly, Brazil’s supposed racial paradise served as a foil for African American intellectuals who used it as an argument against racism and segregation in the United States.

JAMES N. GREEN  
*Brown University*

WILLIAM J. HAUSMAN, PETER HERTNER, and MIRA WILKINS. *Global Electrification: Multinational Enterprise and International Finance in the History of Light and Power, 1878–2007*. (Cambridge Studies in the Emergence of Global Enterprise.) New York: Cambridge University Press. 2008. Pp. xxiv, 487. \$80.00.

I read this book with great interest and with great pleasure. The subject is important and the story is well told. As is not always the case, the title is a very good reflection of its content. William J. Hausman, Peter Hertner, and Mira Wilkins’s monograph deals with the role played by multinational enterprises and international finance in the development of the light and power industry throughout the world from the 1870s to the 1970s, by which time this role virtually came to an end; an epilogue brings the story up to date. This story is not new, as it is part of the general history of international

business (with which it has much in common). But it has never been told in this way.

Three features make this book a new and original work. First, it combines two or even three sets of writings in business and economic history that have had little interaction with each other: the history of the electrical industry, the history of multinational enterprises, and the history of banking and finance. Second, it encompasses the whole world and offers a truly comparative perspective. Third, it provides an excellent analysis of the first globalization of the world economy, not by sacrificing to current fashions but by closely looking at the activities of the global players in a global industry.

One interesting and extremely valuable aspect of this scholarly undertaking is that it is the collective effort of a group of highly distinguished business and economic historians, as opposed to an edited volume gathering essays written by individual authors. Moreover, the authors maintain a unity of purpose from beginning to end. The book is more concerned about the complexities of historical events than grand but approximate generalizations. However, the historical past is analyzed through a series of original and operational concepts defined for the purpose of the study by making ample use of the business, finance, and economics literature.

The book is divided into seven chapters. The first two deal with concepts. Chapter one provides a broad analytical survey of the development of the electrical industry, mainly at technical and economic levels, from the early nineteenth century to the 1930s. Chapter two critically reviews the literature on international business (with particular attention to portfolio and direct investments, freestanding companies, and corporate governance) before defining a typology of foreign direct investments in the power and light industry that is then employed throughout the remainder of the book. Chapters three through seven follow a fairly uncontroversial chronological order: 1880–1914, 1914–1929, 1929–1945 (with these three eras forming the core of the book); and 1945–1978 and 1978–2007 (with these last two, shorter chapters being conceived as a conclusion to the story with, so to speak, the death and rebirth of multinational enterprise in the electrical industry).

This monograph is primarily concerned with the major players in the field: the manufacturers in the electro-technical industry; the banks and other finance companies, such as investment trusts; and the holding companies. The authors pay particular attention to the networks of relationships existing within and between these players, their cooperation as well as their competition, and the making and unmaking of business groups. The text provides a fairly comprehensive view of the actors who mattered, as witnessed by the list given in Appendix A, which contains some 300 entities. Several of these companies, groups, and networks are followed across several chapters, with their names becoming familiar to the reader as the story unfolds. In that respect, this thoroughly researched book succeeds

in combining relevant details with general trends and broad explanations.

This is a great piece of scholarship written by three leading economic and business historians, with another eight eminent experts contributing indirectly to the volume. Given the importance not only of electrification but also of big business and high finance, it should be of interest to all historians of the modern and contemporary world.

YOUSSEF CASSIS

*University of Geneva and London School of Economics*

ERIKA KUHLMAN. *Reconstructing Patriarchy after the Great War: Women, Gender, and Postwar Reconciliation between Nations*. (The Palgrave Macmillan Series in Transnational History.) New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2008. Pp. xiv, 246. \$74.95.

Erika Kuhlman sets an ambitious goal: to expand our understanding of the process and meaning of peace both between and within nations by exploring not only the words and actions of official peacemakers but also the ways in which “ordinary people—soldiers, housewives, business people, social workers, clergy, and especially women—conducted their lives in the face of a watershed international event such as the Great War and its aftermath” (p. 3). The author of *Petticoats and White Feathers: Gender Conformity, Race, the Progressive Peace Movement, and the Debate over War, 1895–1919* (1997), Kuhlman continues her engagement with complex questions of war and peace, nations and citizenship, and identity and hierarchy. The author succeeds admirably in providing her readers with a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the process of international and domestic reconciliation in the postwar period in Germany and the United States and the complex ways in which the reestablishment of patriarchy was woven into this process.

Kuhlman begins with an exploration of the American occupation of the Rhineland and efforts to control women’s sexuality conducted by both Americans and Germans in the occupied zone. She documents the important assertion of, and interplay between, two systems of domination—patriarchy and the international power of the war’s victors—as the two countries, and in particular American soldiers and German civilians, navigated their postwar relationships. According to Kuhlman, patriarchy was similarly bolstered in the “Rhineland Horror” campaign, an international, and indeed transnational, propaganda campaign against French use of African troops in the occupation, a protest initiated by Germans but soon successful in recruiting whites across the political spectrum and across national borders on the basis of white supremacist beliefs. Turning to American attitudes toward peacemaking, Kuhlman discovers the dominance in the United States of a traditional approach to the war’s outcomes, an approach that claimed the victor’s role in controlling and redeeming the conquered foe and framed those actions

in distinctly masculine terms. It is in this context that Kuhlman’s explication of the transnationalist thinking of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) provides an example of an alternative vision of the war’s end, as American and German members imagined a reconciliation process in which both women and men, and both the vanquished and the victors, might work together toward lasting peace. Although official peacemakers had little trouble dismissing WILPF’s call for a role for women, particularly given the essentialist position of women’s natural pacifism the group wielded in making its claim, women’s efforts to exert influence through unofficial channels, including in the provision of relief, illustrated the possibilities of a different kind of peace based in true reconciliation. In the end, militarism and patriarchy won out. On the homefront, too, women advocating for a new world of women’s full equality found militarism, nationalism, and patriarchy too powerful to overcome as Germans and Americans alike commemorated only the masculine heroism of war and found a much-sought-after normalcy in returning women to a dependent and subordinate female role. Patriarchy ruled the day domestically, while victors ruled the vanquished in the international realm.

Appropriately published as part of the Transnational History Series, Kuhlman’s work succeeds in complicating our understanding of what constituted the peacemaking process following World War I. Exploring the role of non-governmental actors as diverse as the American Legion Women’s Auxiliary and WILPF, the “Rhineland Horror” propagandists and the civil rights activist Mary Church Terrell, and giving voice to countless other individual writers, thinkers, and activists from the United States and across Europe, with special focus on Germany, Kuhlman helps us to recognize that peacemaking is not exclusive to policymakers but also involves the process of reconciliation among human beings across and within national borders. In such a process after World War I, transnational identities and issues necessarily played a significant role. By restoring this broader understanding of the postwar process, Kuhlman acknowledges the agency of individuals and organizations that attempted to shape the future, and illustrates as well the wide range of competing visions that surrounded official leadership even as they nevertheless constructed a notably traditional peace.

With an enormous subject and complex ideas, the clarity and grace of Kuhlman’s work are especially praiseworthy. Given her explicit organizational scheme, Kuhlman might have eliminated the sometimes too frequent internal references to previous or forthcoming discussions in her text. But this is a very minor distraction in a book that is otherwise scrupulously polished and well presented. Kuhlman’s argumentation is cogent and her evidence thorough. The book is well grounded in the surrounding historiography, proving attentive to both complementary and competing interpretations. It is also richly documented with a wide range of primary sources from both sides of the Atlantic, especially news-